

This Shelter of Wings and Antlers and Claws

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This Shelter of Wings and Antlers and Claws

by [TheSilverQueen](#)

Summary

When Will is kidnapped by the goblins, the goblin King Mason takes a rather unhealthy interest in him, so Will does the natural thing and spits in his face. Mason then declares that any goblin may claim him. After a fierce but brief battle, only one goblin emerges victorious. The goblin offers him shelter, offers him food, and offers him magic.

“I want something,” Will tells him. “Your name. I’m not calling you master.”

The goblin laughs. With his head of antlers thrown back and his wings mantled and his clawed fingers tucked into his sleeves, he almost looks . . . human. “My name is Hannibal,” the goblin says eventually, when he’s finished laughing. “I think you’ll do very well here, Will.”

Notes

This was supposed to be my entry for the Hannigram A/B/O Big Bang. The RL reared its ugly head, I ended up out of commission for several months, and now here we are!

Inspirations: This story was inspired heavily by The Hollow Kingdom trilogy by Clare B. Dunkle. Goblins in that story generally kidnap humans or elves to serve as brides, and they're supposedly the representation of one creator god's ideal of strength, so they have magic but they also sometimes are born with animal appendages, because what's stronger than an arm that's actually the paw of a lion? (If this sounds familiar, yes, I have written another ficlet in the same universe, you can find [Elf](#) as day 12 of my HanniHolidays 2016 Ficlet Collection.)

Warnings: Will is threatened with rape twice, but only with words and no one ever actually touches him against his will. And discussion of experimentation and torture, because what can I say, I like torturing our cannibae.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Part I: Wings

Will had heard, of course, of the goblin raids. Everyone had, because the raids had been going on as far back as the oldest sages could remember. But since the raids left no city or town untouched, Will's father had shrugged and chosen the one with high castle walls, an armed garrison, and a thriving economy. That it also hadn't been raided in well over three generations was a side bonus.

With the benefit of hindsight, Will thinks that perhaps this long drought simply meant three things.

Firstly, that a raid was long overdue.

Secondly, that the soldiers that manned the garrison and the high castle walls had grown complacent and were therefore quite unprepared for when the goblins did raid.

And thirdly, well – thirdly that Will was long out of practice too.

When the goblins come, Will flees for the woods and barely makes it five steps before he's swept off of his feet and whacked solidly across the head. He's groaning and on the verge of unconsciousness by the time the raid is done – for goblin raids are swift and silent, like thieves stealing across the water on shoes made of wings, so that one has already the time to notice they have happened before they are over and treasure is missing – so when he sees the moon and the beautiful stars swallowed up by the earth, it is the last time he sees the sky for months to come.

Then the goblin hits him hard on the head once again, and Will knows nothing else.

Will wakes up in a cage, because of course he does. His throat is parched, his head is throbbing, and he's so cold that his breath is more akin to clouds than air. On the bright side, he apparently isn't dinner, because there's a tiny bowl of bread and water in the corner of his cage, but his dinner is hard as a rock, so it's not saying much.

He can hear other prisoners too, weeping or shouting or banging against the cage. Will just shrugs and continues chewing on his hunk of bread, because he sees no point in fighting against an enemy that will not yield. Goblin faces are far easier to break than iron bars, after all.

Of course, when the goblins do show their faces, they're armed to the teeth and bearing bright torches. Torch probably isn't even the right word, for Will is used to torches of oil and wood and flame; these torches are floating balls of blue flickering light that crackle and spit and hiss, and to attempt to look straight at them is like looking straight at the sun. Will has to cover his eyes when they go past or risk going blind, so the goblins they all appear to cower like rats in the sewer.

“A successful raid,” says one goblin, almost conversationally.

“Only if the King judges it as such,” says another.

“We’ve got ten of the puny things here,” says a third. “There must be one of them that’s soft enough to tempt the belly of the King.”

Will hears the rusty creak of a lock, and then the desperate screams of a young man. He claws and scrapes at the floor and walls, but the floor is smooth and the walls slick; he gains no purchase. And the goblins outnumber him by six to one, so they whistle cheerfully as they drag him down the long hallway.

As soon as the doors to the dungeon slam shut, the wails begin anew.

The goblins take a woman the next day.

The day after, a man.

And the day after that, a woman so young she’s more of a girl-child than a woman.

The day after that, Will finally sees the goblin King.

The goblin King is tall, taller than any of the stories Will has heard and any of the pictures he has seen. He’s adorned in beautiful clothing, but it’s a subtle beauty; instead of the flashy gold and glittering jewels Will has seen on priests and nobles, he is clad in understated robes of sword-steel grey and bears a crown of flowers bound in twisting, elegant circles of gold. His hair is long and shiny enough to make any woman jealous, and his skin smooth and unmarked enough to enrage any knight. If not for the look of sheer, unaltered rage on his face, Will might even call him beautiful.

“One human,” the King is hissing, as his underlings whimper and press themselves into the ground. “I asked for one human worthy of entrance to my harem. Just one. Was that so hard?”

“No, Your Majesty,” they whine.

“One human,” the King repeats, as though they hadn’t spoken. “Just one teeny, tiny, soft human. HOW HARD WAS IT?”

One of the goblins trembles so hard he actually drops a torch. It goes whizzing down the corridor in a zigzag pattern, like a dog on fire, and Will jerks back so hard in surprise that he bangs against the edge of his cage with a thump.

And the thing is – Will’s been down in the goblin kingdom for who knows how many days at this point, but Will’s body doesn’t care whether he’s in the safety of his home or trapped in a goblin cage. So Will’s treacherous body decides that the best way to express his startlement is not to set his heart beating or make him pant, but rather to fill the air with potent omega hormones, either to cause the alphas nearby to fight so much he can slip away or to attract the strongest to him for protection.

Either way it's annoying as hell, and goblins have better noses than the best human alpha.

The goblin King's fist halts immediately, and his nose twitches. Will swallows and goes as still as possible, but it's too late.

"An omega," the King breathes. "Oh dear, oh dear. One of you poor little things is an *omega*. Oh my poor dear! And kept in this cold, dark, smelly dungeon. No, no, no, it isn't right at all. Come out, little omega! Come out, come out, wherever you are!"

Will squeezes his legs together and stuffs a fist in his mouth, but it's no use; he's an omega about to go into heat, and his scent is a dead giveaway. The King locates his cell between one breath and the next.

The King grins at him, and for a second, just one second, Will understands why goblins were once mistaken for angels – his eyes gleam with light and his teeth shine in the darkness and magic glints off his robes like wings. Then the King leans forward, and Will sees the stains of blood upon those perfect teeth, sees madness dancing in those gleaming eyes, sees the way magic curls and twitches around him like it's just barely under his control. He's no angel come to save Will. He's the goblin who locked him up, and now probably wants to eat him.

"*You*," the King says, and rips off his door with one gesture.

Will lowers his hand away from his mouth and waits for the King to get close enough. "Me," he agrees, and sinks his teeth straight into the goblin King's perfect, shining, unmarred skin.

When the King is done screeching and waving his hand about like he's never been hurt in his entire life, they drag Will away and force a burning hot liquid down his throat. Will has no idea what it is, but since they tip his head back and pinch his nose shut, he doesn't really have a choice. It makes the room go a bit hazy, and when they release him, he falls to the floor at the King's feet like a drooling damsel in distress.

The King says . . . something, and then Will is hoisted up and carried away.

They strip Will and scrub him within an inch of his life, and whatever the potion was, it makes Will pliable and limp and drowsy, so he can't even be indignant against the blatant violation of his privacy. He can't even object when they leave him barefoot and dripping on the tiles for all the world to see, and then he really can't object when they descend upon him with towels and brushes and all manner of things.

By the time the potion is beginning to wear off and Will is regaining feeling in his toes and fingers again, he's been forced into new clothes. By the time he can move his arms and legs, they click heavy chains around his hands and throat. And by the time he can speak and think clearly again, they slap a muzzle on his mouth.

Will snaps his teeth, just because he can, but the goblins just ignore him and back away, probably because they're finally done torturing him.

That is when the King sweeps back in, resplendent in new robes. His hand looks as good as new, but Will sees how he maintains a careful distance as he circles around Will. It gives him a little joy, if anything can.

“Finally,” the King sighs. “Beautiful and clean, as any of my harem should be. What should I call you? I suppose I could go by your human name for official purposes, but if you keep on biting like a naughty puppy, I might be forced to muzzle you for all your days, so a name really wouldn’t be needed. Oh, don’t look so concerned. You’ll be well attended to, and you’ll want for nothing. You can have your pick of anything in this kingdom: food, clothing, jewelry. All of it can be yours. I wouldn’t even need to take that muzzle off, to be honest; my magicians would ensure that you were fed and watered. What say you, human?”

“I think you should take that offer and shove it up your – Ah!”

It’s like his spine is on fire – Will is screaming before he even hits the floor, writhing and kicking, but there’s no relief to be had. *Something* is racing up his back like his skin has been put to the torch, and when it ends, it’s like an eternity has passed.

When Will struggles to his knees, the King is kneeling by his side, eyes closed in sorrow.

“I am truly sorry, my dear,” the King says sadly. “But fire must be tamed by fire. I do admire your human emotions; they are indeed so strong and fierce and beautiful. However, I am the King, and you *will* respect me as such.”

Will jerks his chin up and smashes him straight in the nose with the heavy muzzle. “You’re no king of mine.”

The King spits blood on the ground. Now the madness does not linger in his eyes; it rages, like a forest fire bearing down upon a village. He grasps Will’s head in his hands and *squeezes*, like he means to turn Will’s head into pudding, and fire licks up his spine again.

Then he drops Will suddenly and stands up.

“Very well,” the King says. “Don’t be my harem slave. I’ll give to you my nobles then. You’ll make a fine snack.”

The King drags Will through hallway and room like he’s a misbehaving horse, and any time Will hesitates, the King clenches his fist and makes that fire dance on Will’s skin. By the time they reach the throne room, Will is sweating and gasping and probably nowhere near as pretty as he was after the goblins scrubbed him. The King grasps his chains and flings him hard down the stairs of the dais until he’s curled up and wheezing on the floor.

When Will sits up, he’s surrounded by goblins, and suddenly more aware than ever that he’s wearing nothing but a dusty white skirt and blouse and chains.

“I bring to you a gift,” the King says, sounding abruptly bored. “A token of my appreciation. It will belong to whoever claims it. And do hurry; the longer you wait, the more likely I’ll decide to eat it for dinner instead. I think it’ll go lovely with the sheep tonight.”

There's a moment of silence and then –

And then it's like cannons going off. Blood is flying everywhere, and goblins are screeching and biting and clawing, and Will covers his head with his arms and curls his legs up under him and tries not to get stepped on. When one goblin throws a gleaming ball of fire at another, Will squeezes his eyes shut and thinks very hard about wrapping his chains around the goblin King's throat and throttling the life out of him.

Clapping startles Will into opening his eyes again. He sees only darkness, and a moment he thinks he's dead – but then the darkness *moves*, and Will understands that one goblin has wrapped him in giant black wings.

“Interesting,” the goblin King draws.

The victor isn't even breathing heavily, but he's a right sight. He's dressed like a noble of court, but he has towering antlers upon his head, claws that drip blood on his fingers, and great black wings that flicker and twist on his back. He's a goblin all right, but when Will tries to inch away, the goblin simply slides his foot to the right and pins the chain to the ground, choking off escape.

“He is mine. I claim him, and you cannot deny me.”

“Oh, I can't?”

The victor smiles. “No, you can't.”

The King stares at him, rage in his eyes, and then he suddenly slumps. He yawns and waves a hand, as if bored, and says, “Fine, fine. He's all yours.”

The victor bows, wings mantled high, and takes up Will's chain. When Will yanks back, it's like pulling on a stone wall, and the goblin doesn't even flinch. Will is hauled to his feet like he's a child and dragged forward like a mule.

“Oh, and Hannibal? If you eat him,” the goblin King says, picking at his teeth, “do dispose of the bones properly.”

Part II: Antlers

Will is expecting to be dragged to his imminent death, so even though resisting gets him about as far as it did with the goblin King, he drags his heels and claws at the walls and pulls with all his strength against the chain. He's so busy resisting, in fact, that he nearly slams straight into the victor's back when he stops short.

Then he lets go of the chain, so Will takes the opportunity and backs up until he's as far away as he can get.

“Hello,” the victor says. He has a faint accent, but otherwise his English is perfect. “What's your name?”

Will sneers. “You need your dinner to have a name?”

“I’m not going to eat you,” the victor says. He rolls his shoulders and flexes his wings, so that they mantle and then settle at his back. Surprisingly, it does make him seem less threatening when they’re folded up. “I follow the old traditions, unlike Mason. Bearers of life are to be respected, and never harmed.”

Like that’s much better. “I’m not bearing you children either.”

The victor’s eyes crinkle. “Don’t worry; I haven’t claimed you for that purpose either.”

And, well, the legends say goblins either eat humans or breed them or enslave them, so really, Will’s running out of options right now. “So, what, you ate your last slave and need a new one?”

“It might be hard for you to believe,” the victor says, “but I mean you no harm.”

“I’m half naked and trussed up like a pig for slaughter, so, yes, it’s very hard for me to believe.”

The victor makes a quick hand gesture, almost a dismissive flick. The chains rattle and glow, and then slide off, collapsing on the ground as though they were nothing more than flimsy strings than the unbreakable shackles Will found them to be.

“I’m afraid I have little to offer you besides this shelter of wings and antlers and claws. However, if you come with me, I promise you a better fate than one found at the hand of the goblin King.”

Will is very, very good at spotting lies. He’s always been good, because he reads body language as easily as most people spot colors. Whoever this goblin is, he is telling what he believes to be the truth, and his disdain for the goblin King is easy to spot and definitely not faked. Will can completely understand that.

“And what kind of fate are you offering me?” Will asks, rubbing at his wrists.

The victor speaks a word and spreads his hands apart. A soft blue garment expands in the empty space, and the victor offers it to him with an open, gentle expression. “You cannot go home; Mason would slaughter you before you made it outside. And you cannot go to anyone else; I won you, and therefore you are mine. I have been tasked with the preservation and updating of some treatises and books on the practice of goblin magic, and from the look of your hands, you have some skill in writing. Therefore, what I offer you is an apprenticeship.”

“In?”

The victor grins, sharp and fierce. “In magic, of course.”

And he’s not lying, or believes he isn’t lying, but – “Humans can’t use goblin magic.”

“Of course they can. I was human, once.”

Will remembers the easy way the goblins had breached the walls, the way they’d dragged human after human down. He considers how this goblin gestured and spoke so easily,

dismissing chains and conjuring clothes without effort. He thinks about learning that kind of power.

Still, the legends are clear on one thing above all else for goblins.

“I want something,” Will says, “in exchange for my agreement to this apprenticeship.”

“You’re learning,” the goblin notes. “Name it.”

“Your name,” Will says. “I’m not calling you master.”

The goblin laughs. With his head of antlers thrown back and his wings mantled and his clawed fingers tucked into his sleeves, he almost looks . . . human. Will can see where goblin magic might’ve twisted the human of before into the goblin standing before him.

“My name is Hannibal,” the goblin says eventually, when he’s finished laughing. “I think you’ll do very well here, Will.”

“Wait, how do you know my name?”

Hannibal brings him to his suite of rooms, containing a sitting room, a kitchen, a bathroom, a workshop, and a bedroom. He gives Will clothes, which besides from smelling faintly of sandalwood and lemon, seem clean and even are quite warm. And then he takes Will into his workshop and begins doing . . . something.

Will watches warily from where he’s perched on a stool. “What are you doing?”

“Clearing the wards,” Hannibal says absently. “They’re keyed only to me and my magic, so if you began to cast anything, they’d kill it dead before you could finish. Which would defeat the purpose of teaching you.”

“And how exactly are you going to teach me?”

“The same way I was taught.” Hannibal inclines his head towards his desk, where a goblet of rich red steaming liquid sits. “This will enhance your senses. It will make it easier for you to access your magic. I will teach you the basic spells, and once you become familiar with the sensation and the practice, soon you will no longer need the potion.”

“What’s in it?”

Hannibal pointedly ignores him, which does not make Will any more confident about it, but eventually his curiosity gets the better of him and he drinks it.

It’s dark and cloying, but not sweet. The aftertaste is so bitter Will heaves and nearly vomits it back out.

After a few seconds, he can feel it kicking in, because everything in the room seems . . . brighter. More alive. More focused. He can see every speck of dust, he can hear Hannibal’s heartbeat thrumming away next to him, he can sense the faintest thrumming in the air that

signify Hannibal's own magical wards guarding the room. It's like every one of his senses are expanded outwards and magnified by a thousand.

Hannibal watches him with a deep, satisfied gaze, but it's not the stereotypical alpha gaze. It's more like a man watching a caterpillar crawl into a cocoon, knowing that within a few weeks something amazing will emerge.

"Excellent," Hannibal says. "Let's begin."

The first day of magic is hard and exhausting. It takes him hours to learn how to feel his magical center, and even longer to learn how to manipulate it. When he finally manages to coax sparks from his fingers, it feels like a more hard-earned victory than anything Will has ever achieved.

Hannibal stops the lessons then.

"Magic requires fuel, which means you need to eat," he says, guiding Will away from the workshop.

So he takes Will into his kitchen, and then starts cooking, which is bizarre enough that Will stares at him, dazed and dumbfounded. Most alphas expect Will to be the one cooking, and are most taken aback when he refuses. Now Hannibal is smoothly running around his kitchen, frying meat and chopping vegetables and just . . . *cooking*. For Will. For an omega.

That being said, when Hannibal slides it in front of him, Will just digs in without asking questions because it smells amazing, and it tastes even better.

After that, it's time to sleep, and Hannibal does not conjure a second bed or sleep on the couch, but he does considerably conjure a dozen pillows, and he doesn't protest when Will makes a little nest of them around himself on his half of the bed. He merely watches on in amusement, and then wishes Will good night.

Will stays up all night, waiting for Hannibal to reach inside his nest, but Hannibal stays where he is.

It's . . . nice. Weird, but nice.

After that, they fall into a rhythm of magic by day and sleeping by night. Will eventually gives up on his barrier of pillows, mostly because Hannibal never crosses them and because it's annoying to constantly rearrange them every morning.

Of course, just as Will settles into that rhythm, it gets abruptly disrupted by his heat.

Will wakes up *burning*, sweaty and hot and sticky, and when he opens his eyes, he finds Hannibal across the room, sitting stiffly on a chair with his wings mantled behind him.

"You are in heat," Hannibal says.

Will groans. “No kidding.”

“Would you like me to leave?”

“Well, I’m not letting you touch me.”

Hannibal’s lips curl into a smile. Thankfully, he seems more amused than offended. “I wouldn’t dare presume to. Food is in the kitchen. Help yourself. I’ll return to check on you and prepare more food when you sleep.”

Will, who is at this point quite ready to strip naked and hump the bed, only vaguely registers the words and the sight of Hannibal leaving.

Time blurs out. Will tears his clothes off and throws them to the floor, tossing and turning among the bedsheets and pillows, desperately trying to find relief that only an alpha can provide him. His rational mind begins to leak away as his body sinks deeper into heat, pumping out the pheromones to entice an alpha to approach and sate his hunger and protect him at his weakest.

When the scent of *alpha* tickles Will’s nose, he rolls over with a snarl. “Get out, Hannibal.”

Then he freezes, because the alpha staring at him is definitely not Hannibal. It’s another goblin, thick-set and tall, with the horns of a ram protruding from his head and one arm furry and clawed like a cat. He’s actually drooling.

Thankfully, the alpha hasn’t taken more than one step towards Will when Hannibal appears at the doorway, eyes blazing in fury. When the alpha whirls and snarls at him, Hannibal simply lowers his head and charges. The alpha dies quickly, speared upon the sharp tines of Hannibal’s antlers, and within moments the scent of intruder fades beneath the familiar scent of *Hannibal*.

Will, far beyond words, purrs at the smell and sight of his alpha tearing apart a competitor.

Hannibal vanishes into the kitchen, and later that night, when Will’s heat finally ends, he reemerges with a fresh meal for Will.

It’s heart, marinated in sauce and lightly braised.

Will looks from the meat to Hannibal to the bloodstain on the floor, and he *knows*.

But he’s also starving from heat, so he takes the plate and stuffs himself full. Hannibal’s scent thickens with appreciation and adoration, and as Will continues to eat, he goes back and forth between the kitchen and the bedroom, bringing out more meat so that Will’s plate never empties. It’s the best meal Will’s ever had.

Part III: Claws

The morning after his heat, Will wakes up curled underneath the shelter of Hannibal’s wings. Beforehand, he would have been scared or annoyed. Now, he’s too tired to be terrified, and

he knows Hannibal is too much of a gentleman to ever impose. He trusts Hannibal, as weird as he is, and he knows Hannibal would not harm him.

Hannibal's eyes are soft when he meets them. "Good morning, Will."

Will yawns. "Morning."

"Are you sore?"

Will stretches, but he feels only the slight burn from a good workout. It's new – usually the end of an unsatisfied heat leaves Will aching and sore for days. "Actually, no. Did you do something?"

"Just a little magic to speed up the healing," Hannibal says dismissively.

Will hums and curls closer, enjoying the heat that Hannibal's body puts out and that Hannibal's wings keep close. "You said you were human once," he remembers suddenly, gazing at the wings that cradle them both. "What happened to you?"

"The goblin King happened."

Will nearly falls back asleep in the silence that follows before he realizes Hannibal has no intention of continuing that sentence.

"Happened meaning what?" Will prompts.

"Goblins can sometimes be born with appendages of other animals," Hannibal answers slowly. "They regard it as a symbol of their strength. The King was curious as to what would happen if such strength was forced upon a human – would they survive, would they adapt, would they evolve? Or would they just grovel in the dirt and cry and perish? So he ordered a raid, and once he had enough humans, he ordered the experiments to begin."

Will can't picture the stylish goblin King taking up the knife, and he says as much.

Hannibal smiles darkly. "Of course he didn't. He just gave the orders, and sat back to soak in the screaming."

Will can definitely imagine that. The goblin King, high on his throne, sipping wine and eating cheese, reveling in the screams of humans as they were operated on and enchanted and tortured. He probably got right in their face and licked their tastes and fed on their screams, as he did with Will. He probably got a great big adrenaline rush from watching alphas forced to kneel at his feet.

"The King is a beta," Will realizes.

Hannibal dips his head in a nod, stroking one hand absently up and down Will's spine. "Yes, he is. The first beta born King in goblin history."

He doesn't continue, but Will can see where he was going: *Therefore, he is rather insecure, and forces that insecurity onto others by finding ways to artificially elevate himself in order*

to feel better; instead of accepting his place on the spectrum and being content to rule over his kingdom, which heeds his every word because he is King, and would do so regardless of his presentation.

Will feels a smile crawl across his face. “He didn’t know you would end up with magic, did he?”

“No. I was the only survivor, and as such they had no idea what to do with me. Rather short-sighted of them, actually.” Hannibal sighs. “So I . . . happened to wander into a magician’s workshop, and he was more than willing to teach me, since he was getting on his years and I was the first student to approach him in a long time.”

Will snorts at that. He bets Hannibal rarely *happens* to be anywhere. The alpha who plans out a week’s worth of attire and meals wouldn’t just happen to wander into the one place that would give him the means to advance to a prominent place in the kingdom’s hierarchy.

“Do you think I am lying?”

“No. But you’re not telling me all the details either. It’s just the way you are.”

“And you think you know me so well, do you, my dear?”

“Of course,” Will says. “Your magic isn’t the first I’ve learned. I had a little trick, back when I was among my own kind. I could look at people and know everything about them. And I’ve had plenty of time to look at you.”

Hannibal shifts then, rolling Will on top of him and closing his wings to make a living tent around them, dark and warm and intimate. In this position, Will could easily kill him, if he wanted to.

He doesn’t, though.

“What have you seen when you looked?” Hannibal asks.

“A plan to exact your revenge upon the goblin King,” Will answers quietly. “It just needed one extra little missing puzzle piece to make it whole.”

“And you know what that missing puzzle piece is?”

Will closes his eyes and lets magic burn through him. It comes so much easier now, after days of practice and potions, so it’s only seconds after he closes his eyes that sparks ignite from his fingers. They’re bright and strong and beautiful, and they light up the darkness so that Will can see all of Hannibal’s face as he replies.

“Why,” Will says, “it needs a spark.”

The defensive magic around the goblin King is old and powerful and unbreakable. It can drain an attacker dry of life and magic, it can halt a fire or flood in its tracks, it can heal

almost any wound short of death. Hundreds of Kings have added newer and strong layers of protective magic with each reign, and so it's by far the best in the kingdom.

It has one loophole.

Mason gurgles, eyes rolling in panic and foam spilling out of his mouth, as Will stands in front of him and holds him completely still, every inch paralyzed but for his racing thoughts.

"Your subjects hate you, but you are the King. You cannot be killed without an heir or successor to replace. How clever you have been, to never sire a child or name a successor so that you are protected from a coup." Will tilts his head and smiles. "But your magic only defends you against fellow goblins, Mason. I am human. And I think it's time for a new dynasty to begin."

Hannibal slides out of the shadows, wings high and claws extended. He says nothing to Mason, but there's nothing that needs to be said; Mason wets himself when he glimpses Hannibal out of the corner of his eyes.

He knows he can't match Hannibal, and he never could have, even when Hannibal was just a human.

"Thank you for your sacrifice, Mason," Will says sincerely. "Your death will ensure a bright future for our new kingdom. And we'll take far better care of it than you ever did."

Then he meets Hannibal's eyes, and he smiles, and he nods.

One single swipe of Hannibal's sharp claws, and Mason's head falls to one side of the throne while his body falls to the other. The crown – wrought of gold and silver and diamonds mined deep from the bowels of the earth and forged with magic – clatters to the floor and rolls in circles, finally coming to a stop against Hannibal's feet.

Hannibal's eyes are bright. "Magnificent," he says, scent thick with appreciation.

"Control yourself, alpha-mine," Will teases. "We're not done here yet."

Then he bends down, scoops up the crown, and settles it neatly on Hannibal's head. It fits perfectly, as it should; the magic of the kingdom recognizes Hannibal as the victor and therefore the new rightful goblin King, and the crown resizes itself to fit. It doesn't reject him either, glowing as brilliantly as ever, which means their plan has worked.

"All hail King Hannibal," Will whispers.

"And all hail my Queen," Hannibal replies. "The most beautiful and powerful and magnificent jewel in our kingdom. I shall have to ensure your crown does you justice, even if all of the precious metals and gems in the world could not compare to you."

"Flatterer. I haven't even agreed to be your Queen yet, you know."

The panic that flashes through Hannibal's eyes is intensely amusing. Will takes a second to bask in the rare moment where Hannibal is caught off guard, but then he moves to reassure

Hannibal before he works himself into a frenzy and Will wakes up to a million courting gifts in his room, more crowns than any one person needs, and an over-the-top proposal. He already knows he'll compromise on an extravagant wedding, and really, that's as far as he wants to go with indulging Hannibal in this matter.

"You do know that if you make me Queen, that acceptance comes with conditions."

Hannibal seizes him tightly, wings and arms wrapped around him, like he wants to stitch them together until they are one mind, one soul, one being. "Anything. I will give you anything."

Will now has a crown, a kingdom, and magic, but nothing has ever given him the sense of power like he has now, watching Hannibal tremble as if awaiting his mercy. Then again, Hannibal has his own power over Will, so they're equals in this matter.

"Always love me," Will says quietly, "and never leave me. Those are my conditions. Take them or leave me."

Hannibal's look of adoration takes his breath away. *You are mine and I am yours*, the monster in Hannibal's eyes says. *I will never leave you. How could I, when you are everything?*

"Well, with an offer like that, how I could refuse?"

For their first meal as King and Queen, Hannibal serves braised heart.

"Freshly killed," he says, eyes twinkling. "Only the best for my Queen on the start of the rest of our life together."

Will eats it all.

FINIS

End Notes

A/N: And after that Hannibal and Will become the new goblin King and Queen and start a nice little dynasty of their own.

My thanks to the mods of the Hannigram A/B/O Big Bang for putting this event together, even though I missed the deadline by, uh, a LOT. So much so, in fact, that we're well into the [Hannigram A/B/O Reverse Bang](#) territory, so stay tuned for that to come out!

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